

TRANSCRIPTIONS



**Head Coach Kyle Shanahan
Press Conference – September 18, 2019
San Francisco 49ers**

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Opening comments:

“For practice today: [RB Tevin] Coleman’s out with the ankle, [DL Dee] Ford quad irritation, [WR Jalen] Hurd back, [T Joe] Staley fibula, [WR Trent] Taylor ankle, [S Jaquiski] Tartt Toe and [DB] Jimmie Ward will be limited again.”

You read that pretty quickly, but I did catch Tartt, toe?

“Tartt, toe.”

Is that a turf toe type of thing?

“It’s not a turf toe, but it is his toe, he’ll be day-to-day.”

Is Ford a day-to-day situation?

“Yes, Ford same thing.”

Regarding Ford, obviously, I guess what level of concern is there just because of -?

“I mean, for him to have the set back like he did after missing some of camp, there’s always a concern. But, he’s day-to-day, had a chance to practice today. We’re going to play it safe. We’ll see here over the next two days, which makes me somewhat optimistic for the game, but we’ve got to play it day by day. It’s something he’s dealing with. Feels better now than it did after the game on Sunday, so hopefully that will continue.”

Is this basically the same thing that he dealt with in Kansas City?

“Yes.”

And he was able to play through it?

“Yeah.”

I know it’s just a game on the schedule, but home opener and the fact that you guys have started out so well with a 2-0 record, do you expect a little bit of a special vibe in the ballpark and how good will that feel?

“I love when you give momentum to the fans and stuff. Hopefully they are excited with us coming back and it’s the first game of the year. Hopefully they are excited with it is the first game and that we are 2-0. I hope we come out there and play well because of it. I

know our guys are pumped to be back, we've been on the road for a while. This will be our first game in the stadium this year, we plan on it being a good year in our stadium."

You've had nine defensive linemen active in the first two games. Is that a product of the way you want this to happen as far as keeping guys fresh throughout a game or is it a result of the temperatures that you've played in?

"It's a result of everything. It has to do with what schemes you're going against, sometimes temperature, just how you see the game going. We would love to dress all 53, but you've really got to make those decisions based off of who's healthy and wherever you can get an advantage. That's something that changes week-to-week, that's why a lot of these decisions we don't really make until Friday or Saturday."

Is the plan with CB Jason Verrett just to sort of ease him back in, make sure he's in football shape before putting him in game action or is it just like what you said?

"We wanted to play it slow with Verrett. We knew he had a chance to really come here and compete, but he had a pretty bad injury the first week of camp so he didn't get to do anything until Week 1. So, really the first two weeks wasn't much of an option for us. I know he was really wanting to get out there last week, but we're trying to play it smart with him. I know he'll have a better chance to get up this week. That's something that we'll discuss. It won't all just have to do with him. It will have to do with the rest of the roster and how we plan on attacking those guys."

Why the change at long snapper?

"After a couple of weeks, not just the games, but some things in practice too we just felt that we could get better and when there was an option out there we pulled the trigger and hopefully we will."

Was there something LS Colin Holba wasn't doing particularly well?

"This isn't my area of expertise, but there are very little details and stuff with timing and you want guys to be perfect every time. No, he wasn't perfect so we are just trying to see if we can get someone a little more consistent. He wasn't bad though either. We just thought we could make an upgrade."

You guys got a lot of production out of the running game in three guys, three backs who are undrafted. What is it about that position that allows guys who were drafted low or not drafted in the NFL to be able to do well?

"I mean, I know it happens a lot probably more with running backs, but I think there is a chance that it could happen with all positions. It takes 11 guys to run the ball. If you've got the other 10 guys working very hard, not just the O-Line and tight ends, but the quarterback, the receivers, everyone throughout the week and then you have the right type of guys at running back they can make you even better. I thought we had a real good game, the 10 guys blocking, and then I thought our backs even got a lot more. I mean, I always look at how much they get that we block for and then they are paid for what they get after. All three of our guys broke a lot of tackles and did a great job. If you want one guy to do it all on his own you might have to always go for a top-five pick and you're going

to be disappointed until [former Detroit Lions RB] Barry Sanders comes around. I never feel like running the ball with just one guy, it's got to take everyone."

You haven't been in this situation, neither have most of the guys on the team. Do you have to temper expectations or try to make sure they don't look too far ahead or beyond this game?

"I don't think so. I think our team is smart enough and knows the deal. There's not one person in our building, at least that I've noticed that feels like we've arrived by any means. We won a very hard fought game that was sloppy at times the first week that easily could have gone the other way. We know our guys came out ready to go last week and everything kind of just clicked. But, I mean, if you think that at all I promise you that you're going to get humbled this week. Doesn't matter what happens. We feel good being 2-0, but you go into the Bye week 2-1 and that's all taken away. It's very important for us to go into this Bye week 3-0. You can't just wake up on Sunday and decide to do that. You better be as humble as can be. Our backs are against the wall, the way I look at it. We've got to come out just as hungry as Pittsburgh's going to be because I know their backs are against the wall and I know their coaching staff, I know a lot of their players, I know it's going to be an extremely hard, physical game on Sunday."

When somebody of T Joe Staley's caliber goes down, do you have to account for that game planning no matter who comes in to replace him its' going to be a little bit of a notch down, do you have to account of that?

"Yeah, of course. You have to account for that stuff all the time. There's a lot of good pass rushers in this league too. Even when you have guys like Joe and guys I've had in the past. You still have to account for that stuff. When you lose a great player like Joe it heightens that a lot from the coaching staff and those are things you think about all day Tuesday and Monday. But, you also can't get enamored with it too. There are a lot of other people on the field that you've got to take care of and try to help too. I'm confident that [OL Justin] Skule will come in and by no means will he be perfect just like Joe isn't, but the game's not too big for him. I know he'll battle and give us a chance to win."

What do you know about him other than that he played like 40 consecutive games and came out of the SEC?

"Just being around here, he doesn't talk very much, which I kind of like. He's just quiet, goes about his business. It's not because he's not confident. I think he studies things very well, I think he's very smart. Just watching him out in walk through today, did the game plan very well. A lot of times guys hear it on a Wednesday in the meetings and they go out to walk through and it's their first time getting a start and everyone knows it and they kind of freak out a little bit. He's the same as he's been every day, just doesn't talk much and pretty low key. I like guys who are like that."

Why did you guys bring in T Sam Young yesterday when you saw him a couple weeks ago?

"We have our reasons. We wanted to talk to him a little bit, see him in person, make sure nothing changed in the last couple weeks, sometimes it does. But, a lot of things play into

that. We've got to look at the rest of our roster as the week goes. We know that Sam is a possibility, but it didn't make sense right now."

You guys haven't had the greatest home-field advantage, well not since before you were here, at Levi's at all. Pittsburgh fans travel really well. Do you have any concerns about what kind of a vibe it's going to be or are you expecting it to be a strong 49ers crowd?

"Yeah I'm expecting it to be a strong 49ers crowd. Pittsburgh always travels well wherever I've been. When I was in Atlanta, when we were on our way to the Super Bowl, we still had to use the silent cadence at home even when we were I think 11-4 at the time. It's not always like that. I don't think we've given our fans a lot to be excited about in the two years I've been here at home or the years prior. But, when we have, I think our stadium has been loud. I always revert back to, I think it was the Christmas Eve game versus Jacksonville. I mean, we were out of it and I thought our fans were as loud as any stadium I've been at. I felt it last year versus Oakland. I felt it versus Seattle last year, so I think our fans come ready and if we come ready I think we'll be very happy about our home-field advantage."

When do you expect of Pittsburgh Steelers Head Coach Mike Tomlin without Pittsburgh Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger?

"Mike's Mike. He's going to be aggressive in everything he does. He's not going to change in whatever he does. Mike's a very confident guy. There's no BS to him. He's going to challenge his team. They didn't play well Week 1, they played a lot better last week. They definitely could have won that game, but they came up short. Now they're 0-2, their back's against the wall, especially losing a great quarterback like that, but that won't phase Mike. He'll rally everyone together and I know we are going to play a real good team on Sunday."

Being 2-0 and there's chatter around the league about guys potentially wanting trades or guys who could be traded, is it tough for you to deal with being 2-0 and think, "Oh, maybe we're just a piece away from really making a huge upgrade," or how do you look at possible additions like that that could include giving away premium draft picks and paying a lot of salary?

"The same way I looked at stuff when we were 0-9. I mean, I don't feel any different being 2-0. I know, very easily, we could be 1-1 and just a few things, we were up 14-7, we have a turnover, they could've made it 14-14 like that and our defense ending up holding them, we got it back and really scored on three possessions ending it within the second quarter and the third quarter that kind of got out of hand. Just a few plays away from that not being the case. I don't get caught up in that at all. It's pretty easy. We listen to everything and we're always going to entertain everything, but our record right now doesn't change anything."

You and Tomlin go back pretty far, obviously, to the Tampa days. What kind of influence has he been on you as you've gone through the coaching ranks?

"I'd just say all those guys at Tampa were some of the biggest influences I had. I grew up in football a lot, so I was always paying attention to things for a while just trying to play

and just being around it all the time, but went more to offense. My two years in Tampa were great. The first year working with [Oakland Raiders head coach Jon] Gruden and just trying to catch up with all the work he had me do. By the second year, understanding what I was doing and being able to get the stuff done early, I spent all my time with the defense and the guys I hung with the most were usually Mike and [Atlanta Falcons assistant head coach & wide receivers coach] Raheem [Morris], so they would bring me in a lot of the DB stuff and really taught me the foundation of defense. And all the guys there, I don't want to leave anyone out, with [Dallas Cowboys defensive coordinator Rod] Marinelli and [Los Angeles Rams assistant head coach and linebackers coach] Joe Barry and [defensive backs/passing game coordinator] Joe Woods, who's here now and [former NFL defensive coordinator] Monte Kiffin. It was an unbelievable staff and the foundation of football that I learned from those guys is, to me, is what I based everything on in what I believe in, offensively and how to attack defenses."

Did you stay close with Mike?

"Yeah. I mean, none of us are big phone guys, so we're not keeping up that way. But, anytime that, now that I'm a head coach, I get to see them at the owner's meetings and we always see each other in Indy and stuff like that."

You said you're expecting a hard-fought, physical game. Does Pittsburgh have a certain identity regardless of who their quarterback is or who their skill guys are?

"Yes. I mean, they've all been there for a long time. I know there's a little turnover, but defensive coordinator's been there forever, Mike's been there forever now. They have some different players on defense and offense, but it's the same message, it's the same mentality. They're hitters, they're not just going to sit back and let you scheme them up. They're going to try to get after you and they can tackle and they can hit and they can do it on both sides of the ball."

Since Skule is kind of an unknown, is this kind of a one-game tryout for him to see if he can be the answer until Staley gets back?

"I mean, it would be if there was like eight people behind him and you would just keep doing it. This is what you deal with in the NFL. We wouldn't have kept Skule on our roster if we didn't think he was an NFL player. You always want to give those guys more time, because the more time they have, the better they get. But, that time ran out. He's going to go this week and I know he's going to have some ups and downs, but I believe he's made of the right stuff. When you're made of the right stuff, whether you have a positive or negative experience, you can always get better from it."

QB Jimmy Garoppolo said you kind of got into a roll when you were calling plays on Sunday. Is part of that ability just because you have more guys who understand your offense and it was also getting--?

"I still think we're working on that, especially with the younger guys and stuff. But, I mean, I just think it was just because all 11 guys in every phase were playing very well. When you have the run game going, it's a lot easier to have the pass game going and vice versa. To be able to hit on a couple screens, to hit on a couple play actions, a couple bootlegs and then to run the ball very well, if you're hitting in all those areas and you haven't even

gotten in a drop back, it just puts a lot of pressure on the defense. It was a lot more fun to call plays and stuff like that when it's like that and you can avoid third down."